

**TESTIMONY TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS, OVERSIGHT,  
NUTRITION AND FORESTRY  
OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

**by**

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**on behalf of the**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL FORESTRY  
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (NAPFSC)**

**re: Forestry Research, Extension and Education Programs  
in 2001 Farm Bill**

**JUNE 12, 2001**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Patrick Reid. I am the Director of the School of Renewable Natural Resources at the University of Arizona and am here in my capacity as President-elect of the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges (NAPFSC). NAPFSC is comprised of the 67 universities that conduct the Nation's research, teaching, and extension programs in forestry and related areas of environmental and natural resource management. NAPFSC schools work in close partnership with the USDA research programs through extramural contracts and cooperative agreements. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony on our priority farm bill issues.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 1998 Farm Bill and various subsequent reports and conference proceedings have identified the need for greater attention on the emerging issues confronting non-federal forest lands. Today these forests are facing threats from a myriad of factors. Many private landowners are poorly equipped to make informed decisions about the management of their lands. Yet these decisions in the aggregate have important ecological, economic and social implications for society.

NAPFSC is pleased to be one of the cofounders of the National Coalition for Sustaining America's Nonfederal Forests. The Coalition and its subsequent report came out of a Forestry Summit held in 1999 that brought together key forestry leaders and landowners from across the nation. I would like to note the coalition report was recently sent to every member of Congress. The outcome of the Summit confirmed the need for increases in forestry research funding focused on non-federal lands and for an increase in collaborative efforts between university-based research and the federal agencies. There is great capacity in our nation's research universities to provide more research and educational outreach.

The National Coalition for Sustaining America's Nonfederal Forests has documented a plan of action to conserve and sustain our nation's nonfederal forest lands. The plan stresses the importance of cooperation among the public universities, state forestry agencies, federal agencies, and the many forest land stakeholders. Key elements of this plan are research capacity and concerted action on stakeholder priorities. The report documents the need for a substantial *investment to provide the science foundation for the sustainability of these forests*, to transfer this knowledge into on-the-ground management and conservation practices, and to build local professional capacity in every forested region of the nation. NAPFSC endorses this long-term plan and recommen8 -15 T Tj 156 0 32.7 w (h16 Tw (2 ) Tj a

## **PROPOSED SUBTITLE: FOREST RESOURCES RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION/OUTREACH**

**Focus:** *A National Initiative for Stewardship and Sustainability of America's Nonfederal Forests*

### **Statement of Need and Background:**

The sustainability and stewardship of America's nonfederal forests are economically, environmentally, and socially vital to the Nation. These lands and their 10 million owners furnish 65% of the Nation's wood supply and form the core of a forest industry that accounts for 8% of the Nation's manufacturing economy. In addition, these lands provide the principal habitat for 75 percent of the Nation's fish and wildlife resources, the foundation for a \$100 billion outdoor recreation industry, the major source of the Nation's water supply, and the source for carbon sequestration. The sustainability of the 487 million acres of nonfederal forestland is critical to providing these uses and values to enhance the quality of life of citizens. Yet the research and education capacity to support these uses is insufficient to the task before us.

Today these nonfederal lands are threatened by urbanization, fragmentation, forest health problems, and increased harvesting pressures. Exacerbating the issue is a growing number of private forest landowners inexperienced in forest stewardship practices, and thus, ill equipped to make informed decisions about their forests. Moreover, America's society is increasingly disconnected from ecosystems and the natural environment that provides its goods and services. Clearly, sustainability requires maintaining biodiversity and improving productivity, yet in a socially acceptable and cost effective manner.

Research, education and extension/outreach are prerequisites to nonfederal forest sustainability. A principal provider of nonfederal forestry research, education, and extension/outreach is the nation's state colleges and universities, particularly those with land grant status (1862, 1890, and 1994). These institutions possess the expertise and infrastructure to conduct research and educational programs to transfer new information to these forest landowners. Further, these institutions also provide the trained professionals we need for research, extension and the implementation of new and improved practices.

These critical research, education, and extension/outreach needs are consistent with the findings of the **National Coalition for Sustaining America's Nonfederal Forests Report** entitled: *A National Investment in sustainable Forestry: Addressing the Stewardship of Nonfederal Forestlands through Research, Education, and Extension/Outreach*, and the **Report of the National Research Council of the Academy of Sciences** entitled: *A Forested Landscapes in Perspective: Prospects and Opportunities for Sustainable Management of America's Nonfederal Forests*.

## RECOMMENDATION

NAPFSC supports inclusion of this forestry research subtitle to improve the coordination of existing authorizations in an effort to integrate and implement a national program on research, education and extension/outreach in conjunction with private and federal agencies. This effort needs to focus on efforts to more effectively address the sustainability of nonfederal forests. Specific recommendations are:

- Fund the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act (CFRA), and the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) at their authorized levels of \$105 and \$15 million respectively, and while doing so, target priority research and extension needs and build research and extension capacity.
- Reauthorize and increase the authorization of RREA to \$30 million.
- Increase the Natural Resources and Environment section of the National Research Initiative (NRI) by \$30 million to incorporate Agenda 2020 priority issues of soil productivity, plant responses (physiology), and information technologies including remote sensing.
- Require the Forest Service to increase collaborative research programs between the Forest Service and University-based research partners.
- Require the Forest Service to implement a competitive grants program within the Forest Service research function as authorized in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998.
- Increase the Plants section of the National Research Initiative by \$10M to address forest biotechnology.
- Increase Forestry Higher Education funding for CSREES by \$10 million to educate and provide a professional workforce to address these needs.
- Improve and enhance the coordination of programs that contribute to the stewardship and sustainability of nonfederal forestlands and to better utilize the research, education and extension/outreach expertise and products provided by the nation's forestry and natural resource schools.

### **Suggested Report Language**

*Create a National Advisory Board on Nonfederal Forests and four (4) regional Research and Education Centers that would coordinate and integrate research, education and extension/outreach with federal financial and technical assistance programs to engage*

*forest landowners in sustainable forestry.*

- Create a new program entitled "Technology Transfer and Applied Research" to forestry schools under the Cooperative Forestry Program in the State and Private Forestry (S&PF) budget.

**Suggested Report Language:**

*Create a Technology Transfer and Applied Research (TTAR) line under the Cooperative Forestry Programs in the USDA State and Private Forestry budget and direct the S&PF staff to establish criteria for a challenge cost share program by consulting with forestry schools eligible to receive funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act. Criteria may include cost sharing, duration of funding, linkage to state forestry agency efforts, linkage to basic and applied research conducted by the subject schools or the USDA Forest Service Research and Development, addressing critical state needs, and multi-school or multi-state cooperation. General themes for this new line may be forest productivity, critical forest management information and analysis, and forest fire, or they may vary in consultation with the regions (Northeast, Southeast, and West). Funds would be equally allocated between the three regions. This Technology Transfer and Applied Research (TTAR) program shall be between the three regions. This Technology Transfer and Applied Research (TTAR) program should be funded in FY2002 at \$5 million.*

- Improve Forest Service priority setting for outreach and cooperative programs.

**Suggested Report Language**

*Direct the Forest Service to develop a plan within 90 days of enactment of this bill to establish a S&PF Area Office to deliver cooperative programs in the Western U.S. Further, Area Office should be co-located with a Forest Service regional office, research station, or university forestry school. In addition, managers direct the Forest Service to reestablish the Southeastern Area Office situated in Atlanta, Georgia.*

**IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL ENSURE:**

- A foundation of research-based knowledge that allows informed decision-making on the management and conservation alternatives necessary to achieve the objectives of America's nonfederal forestland owners and society at large.
- A cadre of forest resource professionals with the skills necessary to address the needs of all segments of our society, especially those that manage and provide stewardship on nonfederal

forest lands.

- An established and effective extension and outreach infrastructure that provides timely delivery of knowledge based products to those who must make management and policy decisions concerning nonfederal forestlands.

Finally, the recommendations for research, education, and extension/outreach will strengthen this nation's commitment and capacity to sustain our nonfederal forests into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for many generations to come. The specific outcomes that will make this possible include:

- Increased scientific understanding, dissemination of knowledge and information, and improved management methods that make it possible to sustainability use nonfederal forests to meet landowner objectives and public expectations.
- A broadly educated professional cadre, recruited from diverse cultural backgrounds, having the skills and knowledge needed for sustainable management of nonfederal forests.
- An American public that understands the benefits they receive from nonfederal forestland and thereby actively support sustainable forest management.

Ultimately, there investments will make the difference and lead us towards truly productive and sustainable nonfederal forests and increased opportunity for the nation.

NAPFSC and our individual member schools look forward to working closely with the Senate and House Agriculture Committees and with the Bush Administration to create an increased focus on nonfederal forestlands as discussions and implementation of the 2001 Farm Bill move forward.